

**TOWN OF ATKINSON  
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
Tuesday, August 6, 2019**

**Members Present**

Bill Smith, Chair  
Wendy Barker, Vice Chair  
Ray Fournier  
Bob Malo  
Peter Torosian  
Bob Worden

**Others Present**

Dave Cressman, Town Administrator

Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

**Agenda:** Review Correspondence, Review Expended Spreadsheet, Meeting with Selectmen on 8/12/19, Liaison Reports, Updates to Calendar

**Chair Smith reported the expended budget was at 54.27% which is normal at this time of year.**

**Chair Smith reminded members that the meeting with the Selectmen was at 6:30 p.m. on August 12, 2019; the regularly scheduled Budget Committee meeting would still be held on Tuesday, August 13; and suggested all members share their suggestions for the Selectmen's meeting.**

**Member Worden suggested that**

- we ask the Selectmen to cautiously pass down a tighter budget for the Budget Committee to work with
- we ask the Selectmen what kind of goals they are considering
- we ask the Selectmen what kind of contract negotiations are they are considering and if a Budget Committee member could be included in the negotiations
- we would like COLA to be agreed upon by both bodies, maybe at the end of the budget cycle
- the Budget Committee goals are:
  - maintain low tax rate
  - fund public safety
  - fund roads and streets appropriately
  - preventive maintenance schedules stay on target
- Per previous member, Dave Paquette, who suggested merging the Director of Elder Services and Recreation Director positions

**Vice Chair Barker had the following concerns/suggestions:**

- Telephone Line Item should be defined

**Member Malo suggested**

- a buildings committee

**Member Torosian suggested discussing the following with the Selectmen:**

- COLA
- Target for the budget
- Elder Services Transportation
- Dispatch
- Post residents' ideas on Atkinson website
- Contract negotiations, e.g. with insurance companies as well as unions
- Conflict of interest in contract negotiations
- Justify increases and/or budget
- Maybe use contractors for some work
- Growth to construction appears to be slowing

**Member Malo suggested**

- List of contractors with renewal dates

**Vice Chair Barker added suggestions for discussion:**

- Contract negotiations for health insurance
- Combining Tax Collector with Town Clerk
- Selectmen e-mail their minutes to Budget Committee and vice versa
- Liaison for Budget Committee needs to show up
- Combining line items across departments for office products, phones

Chair Smith shared that Bill Baldwin was the Selectmen's liaison to the Budget Committee

Member Torosian suggested the Selectmen should assign a backup liaison (discussion indicated it's Greg Spero)

**Member Malo suggested the following discussions:**

- For cutting cost, volunteer list of positions on Atkinson website
- Volunteers could potentially save the town lots of money
- Solicitation for cost reduction / savings suggestions on Atkinson website
- Recognition of volunteers

**Chair Smith shared the following:**

- To find common ground
- Budget Committee should be open-minded, listen to Selectmen's ideas
- Everyone is allowed to speak, not a spokesman
- COLA, merit pay raises
- Low spending, low taxes
- Low taxes is main task of the Budget Committee as a second opinion in addition to the Selectmen. The Budget Committee's final version goes to Deliberative Session for voters to decide.

**Vice Chair Barker suggested hiring a full time or part time grant writer**

Member Torosian suggested a grant writer may cost more in the long run

Administrator Cressman shared that with his experience grants can be addictive but may not be cost effective.

**Chair Smith asked the Committee of their thoughts on the target goal for overall growth.**

Chair Smith stated he would like to keep it in line with revenues.

Member Torosian said he would like to see it not exceed 2%

Member Worden preferred to abstain until more data was obtained

Member Malo said he would prefer to stake it a 2%

Member Fournier agreed that 2% would be a good start

Vice Chair Barker preferred to abstain until more data was obtained

**Chair Smith asked for a motion to approve the minutes of May 21, 2019.** Member Torosian made the motion to approve; member Worden seconded the motion. All members were in favor. Vote: 6/0/0

**Chair Smith asked for a motion to approve the minutes of June 11, 2019.** Member Worden made the motion to approve; member Fournier seconded the motion. All attending members were in favor. Vote: 3/0/3

Member Worden made a motion to adjourn and Member Torosian seconded it. All members were in favor. Vote: 6/0/0

The Atkinson Budget Committee adjourned at 8:53 p.m.